

Featured Orchid

Cattleya [syn.Laelia] purpurata: Late Spring & Summer Blooms



Cattleya purpurata hort. f. *delicata*



Cattleya purpurata hort. f. *carnea*



Cattleya purpurata hort. f. *Aco*

According to Chadwick and Chadwick (2006) "*Cattleya purpurata* is one of the great *Cattleya* species of all time. Without it, our modern purple and semialba *Cattleya* hybrids would be quite different and we would have missed a lot of beauty that this wonderful species has added to these hybrids. The species is easy to grow and has an abundance of beautiful flowers and many fascinating varieties. We feel no orchid collection should be without it." (p. 156-7).

Cattleya purpurata are large [20-30"] plants that produce large clusters of blooms during May and June. This species has the widest range of horticultural forms from the delicate coloration of *C. purpurata* hort.f. *delicata* to the stark contrast of the white flower with a deep rose lip of *C. purpurata* hort.f. *carnea* to the dark red-purple lip on a light lavender flower of *C. purpurata* hort.f. *Aco*.

C. purpurata flowers are very fragrant and can last up to 3 weeks. In our greenhouse, the *rubra* form (white flower with bright red overlay) tends to bloom is late June.

Growing Requirements

Light: 2500-3500 fc. with strong air circulation.

Summer Temperatures: 85-87F daytime; 64-68F nighttime. Note that these are average temperatures within the coldest (southern) part of *C. purpurata*'s habitat in Brazil; habitat in the northern part averages 10F warmer throughout the year.

Winter Temperatures: 66-68F daytime; 49-50F nighttime.

Humidity: 70-80% most of the year, but drop to 65% in late spring and early summer (this is during blooming season).

Water: Frequent waterings are needed, but allow roots to dry out between those waterings. Reduce water in the winter while new growths are forming, but never let plants remain dry for long periods.

Fertilizer: Weekly, 1/4-1/2 strength.

Karlene Sanborn

A.A. Chadwick & Arthur E. Chadwick. (2006). *The Classic Cattleyas*.

Baker, Charles. (n.d.). (www.orchidculture.com)

ISOPE. (n.d.). (www.orchidspecies.com)

Photographs by Karlene Sanborn